COVERUPS!

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OSWALD IN SAN ANTONIO—THE KIRKWOOD CONNECTION

by Jim Marrs

No one whose name has surfaced in connection with the Kennedy assassination fascinates me more than the two Kirkwoods. The father, W. C. Kirkwood, and the son, Pat, have long been fixtures in Fort Worth, Texas. My fascination with their assassination connections comes not from any hard evidence of Kirkwood involvement, but rather from the intriguing relationships between the Kirkwoods and others involved in the assassination.

In this article I will present what I know about the Kirkwoods and, more importantly, describe the time I was able to sit in as investigators for the now-defunct House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) interviewed Pat Kirkwood. As will be seen, it was an eye-opening experience for this reporter.

My involvement with HSCA investigators began on the morning of February 15, 1978. I was working as a general assignments reporter for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and had just been contacted by the paper's police reporter. She said that Pat Kirkwood had dropped by the press room in the Fort Worth Police station and had asked if someone could check to see if a certain investigator was "on the level." It seems he had been contacted by a Joseph J. Basteri, who said he was an HSCA investigator and wanted to interview Kirkwood.

The police reporter contacted me, knowing of my long-standing interest in the Kennedy case and that I had already been in touch with the HSCA on several occasions. I told her I would check out Kirkwood's story.

Later that morning I was able to confirm that Mr. Basteri indeed was with the House committee. Kirkwood was very open and friendly and invited me to come to his office at 2222 Jacksboro Highway and sit in on the interview. I agreed.

I arrived at Kirkwood's real estate office about 1:30 pm and found that the two investigators had arrived only minutes before. They were sitting with Kirkwood at a large round table near his desk. Pat Kirkwood was smiling when I arrived and said "Hi, sit down." Turning to the investigators, he said simply "He's a friend of mine." Thereafter, the two men took no notice of me and began their interview, which consisted of a page of paper with approximately 10 questions on it.

The two investigators, Basteri and Albert Maxwell, both said they were formerly New York City detectives. Their questions almost all pertained to what knowledge Kirkwood had of organized crime figures in not only Dallas and Fort Worth, but Las Vegas.

From the onset, it was obvious that neither of these men had any real backgrounding in the Kennedy case. They asked only the questions which were on their list and made no attempt at followup questions or cross-examination. I was unable to decide if they really knew very little about the assassination or whether this might have been a preliminary interview and they simply didn't want to tip their hand. In retrospect, I feel it was the former.

Kirkwood was "on stage" during the interview, laughing, joking and generally making light of the whole thing. But, for all that, he was surprisingly open and forthright in his answers. During the course of the interview, Kirkwood managed to confirm many items that I had heard and learned over a period of years.

He told of his father's gambling operations at the old family homestead, 2222 Jacksboro Highway. It was quite a place in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Spanish-style home sits on a hill overlooking one of Fort Worth's most famous and disreputable drags. In earlier days it was the scene of many a high-stakes poker game between some of the wealthiest and most powerful men in Texas.

Former House Speaker Sam Rayburn, oilman H. L. Hunt, John Connally, Clint Murchison and, from more than one source I consider reliable, even Lyndon B. Johnson were known guests at 2222 Jacksboro Highway, or The Four Deuces as it was then called.

W. C. Kirkwood was known as a "gentleman gambler." One of his house rules was that no one sat in on the big stakes games who worked on a salary. Only men of independent wealth were clients of the Four Deuces.

Interestingly enough, during this time two of the Kirkwood's closest friends were Lewis McWillie and Bennie Binion, both former Dallas-Fort Worth area gamblers.

Binion was owner of the famous Top O' the Hill Club, Dallas' counterpoint to the Four Deuces. Today, Binion owns the Horseshoe Club and Casino in Las Vegas and McWillie works there as a pit boss. The Horseshoe Club is also the home of the World Series of Poker, where convicted hitman Charles Harrelson was introduced to the Chagra brothers in 1979. Harrelson's wife, Jo Ann, was a blackjack dealer in Binion's Club for several years in the 1970s and probably worked for McWillie.

It's McWillie where many cross-connections begin to crop up. Jack Ruby told the Warren Commission of his fondness and closeness to McWillie by describing him this way: "I called him freqently...I idolized McWillie...I always thought a lot of him...I have a great fondness for him."

In 1960 McWillie was a gambler in Havana. The Warren Commission established that sometime in 1959 Ruby visited McWillie in Cuba and the pair discussed various smuggling deals, including the possibility of bringing in more than 800 jeeps. It was at about this same time that a close friend of Pat Kirkwood recalls that Kirkwood was talking about smuggling operations and Castro.

An FBI memo dated March 26, 1964 is of great interest in showing McWillie's connections to the organized crime heirarchy. The memo states "...McWillie was a member of the so-called gambling syndicate operating in the Dallas area...As of May 1960, McWillie was pit boss at the Riviera Casino in Havana, Cuba. Report reflects that it would appear McWillie consolidated his syndicate connections through his association in Havana with Santos Trafficante, well-known syndicate member, of Tampa, Florida; Meyer and Jake Lansky; Dino Cellini and others who were members of, or associates of, The Syndicate."

McWillie, the associate of Trafficante and Lansky, was closest friends with both Ruby and the Kirkwoods. Pat Kirkwood told the investigators that both he and his father had been the guests of McWillie in Las Vegas. This prompted no discernible reaction from the HSCA investigators.

In 1959, Pat Kirkwood, tiring of being a car racer, opened the first beatnik club in Fort Worth called The Cellar. The Cellar was notorious from its opening and drew a mixed clientele of undercover cops, newsmen, curious youngsters, thugs and beatniks. Although constantly in the news and harried by law enforcement people, the Cellar managed to survive until 1972, when it closed after making two moves from its original location.

The Cellar plays a role in the Warren Commission investigation, because this is where John Kennedy's Secret Service agents were the night before the assassination. Charges dating back to the assassination were that some agents were up till 5 a.m. drinking and enjoying the sometimes-topless waitresses.

These charges prompted the Warren Commission to investigate. It concluded, largely on the basis of an affidavit from Kirkwood, that nothing was amiss since the Cellar did not have a liquor license and therefore could not sell alcohol.

While this was true, it was also true that Kirkwood had an extensive private stock of liquor which was available to any "friend" who happened to enter. Such friends included policemen, city and county officials, newsmen, attorneys and others.

In a 1978 newspaper interview, Kirkwood stated "...we never sold a hard drink in those 13 years." Reminded by the reporter that hard drinks were given away to friends, Kirkwood laughed and replied "By the millions."

This is only one more small instance of the official investigators nor carrying their fact-finding far enough.

While open about his relationship with his friend "Chili" McWillie, Pat Kirkwood was less open about his knowledge of Jack Ruby.

He constantly deprecated Ruby, saying he had "no class" and "liked to play with the little girls."

Kirkwood said Ruby was a "pill head" and was always high on amphetamines or uppers. He said he was always too busy to visit Ruby in Dallas and only went to his clubs about four times prior to 1963. But he said Ruby visited the Cellar several times, apparently trying to woo Kirkwood's female employees away.

Kirkwood said Ruby was too disorganized to be mixed up with organized crime and that no one trusted him.

Kirkwood's account of the assassination weekend was this: a few hours after the President's death, three girls whom he did not identify called him to say they were off work because of the events in Dallas. "They had a long weekend," said Kirkwood, "so what do you do with a long weekend but go to Nuevo Laredo." Kirkwood, the girls and other unidentified friends flew to Mexico.

He said he was sitting in the Cadillac Club on Sunday, November 24, when he saw Jack Ruby shoot Oswald on TV. He said he did not recognize Ruby until after the shooting when he was named by Dallas Police. "I thought 'What does that crazy son of a bitch think he's doing," said Kirkwood. He said upon returning to Fort Worth late the next day he was contacted by the president of the Press Club of Fort Worth. "He said we needed to get our stories together because talk was already starting about the Secret Service agents getting drunk."

Kirkwood said the security men had started the evening at the Press Club, which served liquor and stayed open a few hours later than the law allowed to accommodate the Secret Service men. Finally the president got cold feet and said they had to close. But before announcing this, a call was made to the Cellar and arrangements were made to continue the party there.

Thus it can be seen that 1) the security men had been drinking even before going to the Cellar, and 2) Kirkwood and the Cellar management knew who the agents were and undoubtedly extended them the "friendship" of free liquor.

Within a few weeks of the assassination, FBI agents with a stenographer arrived to take Kirkwood's statement about the Secret Service men in the Cellar. Kirkwood told the HSCA investigators he had assured the Press Club that "he would cover for them." Sure enough, in his Warren Commission testimony, Kirkwood repeated that no agents were drinking that night.

During that same FBI interivew, Kirkwood mentioned something that has never been made public. He told the FBI that Lee Harvey Oswald had worked for a few hours at the Cellar in San Antonio early in October 1963 (at about the time Oswald was supposedly returning from his Mexico trip). This information was classified for some unknown reason and only reached my ears in the mid-1970s. However, during the interview with the HSCA investigators, Kirkwood again related the story of Oswald and the San Antonio Cellar.

The story is this: After Lee Oswald supposedly went to Mexico City "to try and get into Cuba," he somehow ended up dead broke in San Antonio. Oswald went to the Cellar because it was in the early morning hours and it was the only thing open. Oswald asked if he could borrow some money for bus fare back to Dallas and was told he could wash dishes for cash. So, Oswald went to work as a "pearl diver," as Kirkwood called it, but only for "four or five hours." Then, with his earnings in hand, Oswald left.

Kirkwood said no one at the Cellar knew who Oswald was until they saw his face on TV after the assassination. Only then did some of the employees remember the pearl diver.

Neither Basteri nor Maxwell seemed to take notice of this intriguing story, although none of this had ever been made public and Oswald's whereabouts during the so-called Mexican trip have always been the subject of much controversy. There were no followup questions or even a "how come we've never heard that before?"

It was also interesting to me during this interview, as a trained reporter, how Kirkwood would start off answering a question in the negative, but then launch into a lengthy explanation which tended to answer in the positive.

For example, one of the first questions asked was if he knew any organized crime people. Kirkwood answered no, then proceeded to describe his family's closeness with Lewis McWillie. And he admitted that McWillie was a gambler and had lots of friends in Las Vegas. The investigators seemed content to place a simple "no" by the question. They never seemed to get anything from Kirkwood's long soliloquies.

Having asked their ten questions, Basteri and Maxwell launched into some "good ole boys" conversation with Kirkwood. They talked about how Oswald was a "nut" and Ruby was a "creep." Maxwell said it was a shame how the critics of the Warren Commission had "distorted" things and gotten information out of context. Kirkwood caught the drift of this quickly and jumped in, saying that the whole assassination was the result of such a simple act and it was so simple that no one wanted to believe the truth.

This was the thrust of their conversation. And it was astounding to me, because I had just sat there and listened to someone who knew Jack Ruby well talk about matters such as gunrunning to Castro, gambling and the crime ties of Ruby and McWillie and connections to top national leaders. Kirkwood had even told these two investigators that he had "been responsible for several thousand drug arrests" and had worked with several law enforcement agencies, a statement which made me think of rumors that Kirkwood had some kind of relationship with the FBI.

As they were leaving, Basteri and Maxwell told Kirkwood they might come back with further questions, but they were mostly interested in any direct relations with Jack Ruby. They said they were not interested in any other aspect of the case.

Some time later I tried to put together what I had learned by obvserving the Kirkwood interview, and these are my thoughts:

I am fascinated by the fact that the Kirkwoods seem to be a direct link between Jack Ruby and the North Texas underworld to such people as H. L. Hunt, Clint Murchison, Lyndon Johnson, Sam Rayburn and others. G. Robert Blakey, the Chief Counsel of the HSCA, has written a book which builds a pretty good case for organized crime being the culprit in the JFK assassination.

And, it has been well documented how organized crime and high officials of the CIA, and hence the U. S. Government, were working together in assassination plots.

Moreover, here are the Kirkwoods sitting in the middle of organized crime figures, law enforcement agencies, possibly the FBI, and government (charges of indecent exposure were dropped against some of Kirkwood's employees after he went on a hunting trip with the local district attorney and some police officials).

Bear in mind, there is at present no evidence linking the Kirkwoods to the Kennedy assassination. But their connections with Ruby, McWillie and other crime figures, along with their connections to top Texas politicians and Pat Kirkwood's strange flight to Mexico the evening of the assassination make for interesting speculation.

And it is here where the real questions arise, not about any real or perceived role of the Kirkwoods in the assassination, but rather about the quality of two federal investigations.

I will pass comment on the poor Warren Commission; its tissue of lies has already unraveled. But consider the Kirkwood interview in light of the controversy and conclusions of the House Assassinations Committee. And this was only one minor interview.

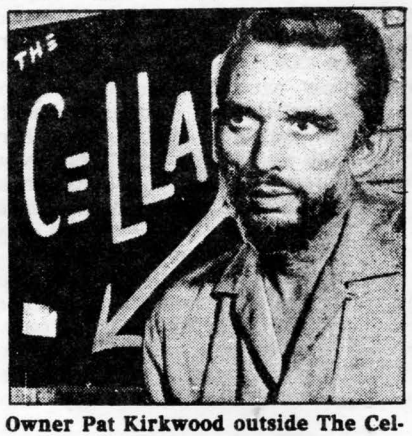
In retrospect I can only think of three conclusions about the interview I attended:

1. Out of consideration to the two New York City detectives, perhaps they considered the Kirkwood interview only a preliminary one and allowed him to ramble on without cross-examination in an effort to draw out more information later. While possible, I tend to discount this theory because of the demeanor of the investigators and Kirkwood.

2. The interview was exactly what it appeared—two retired detectives asking ten questions on a piece of paper to a man they considered a friendly witness. They were neither seeking nor accepting any information not relating to their specific questions. And they had only a cursory knowledge of the assassination. This is, in my opinion, the most likely of the alternatives, but it certainly does not say much for the quality of the House investigation.

3. The entire interview was staged for my benefit because the government knew the direction of my investigations and wanted to conduct a "limited hang-out" of information. It was an attempt to communicate to me that "this information is now in appropriate hands and we are looking into it. There is no need for further search in this area!" This theory is the least believable, although such methods are not beyond the realm of possibility.

So the truth of the Kirkwood connection and the subsequent interview remains as murky as that of the Kennedy assassination.



Owner Pat Kirkwood outside The Cellar before its demise a decade ago.

Jim told me his story about 2 years ago, so I asked him to write it after seeing an article in the 9-5-82 DMN. An excerpt from "The Beat Generation" by staff writer Mike Shropshire:

The Cellar became a sensation. "We opened at around 6 p.m. every day and kept it open until 6 a.m. We could do that because we weren't serving liquor — just coffee, soft drinks and some special conconctions that appeared alcoholic but weren't," he says. "Oh, I'd have several bottles reserved for special customers, like doctors, lawyers or off-duty policemen — people I figured I might have to depend upon later in life."

Kirkwood says he had one steadfast rule that he called "Pat's Law": no narcotics. If Kirkwood saw someone who he suspected was using drugs — often no more than mild sedatives or stimulants — he would call in the police to drag away the accused.

IN 1963, The Cellar gained nationwide exposure — the worst possible kind. Two months after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, news stories reported that in the wee hours of the morning of Nov. 22, 1963, about 19 Secret Service guards assigned to the president had been whooping it up in — you guessed it — The Cellar.

"They were in there laughing about how the only people guarding the president were two firemen stationed on his floor at the Texas Hotel," Kirkwood says.

Subsequent investigations revealed that Jack Ruby also had been known to frequent The Cellar. "He was in there every weekend stealing my waitresses to work as strippers in his clubs in Dallas," Kirkwood says.

Further disclosures revealed that Lee Harvey Oswald had worked one night as a dishwasher in another Cellar that Kirkwood had opened in San Antonio. "The Cellar is mentioned on several pages of the Warren Commission Report," Kirkwood says with pride.

On 10-27 NBC News interviewed two elderly women who saw Mulcahy. He was healthy when he first moved in but his skin was yellow the night before he died and he was acting strangely. Wilson knew Oswald before the assassination, but the source is not clear. It may have been Mulcahy, who worked for Wilson, or Marita Lorenz, a generally discredited associate of Frank Sturgis. This whole affair demands further investigation.

DMN 11-15-82

Slain church leader linked to CIA expose

From Wire Reports

LOS ANGELES — George Peters, 43, the Church of Naturalism founder who was murdered along with a church treasurer in Hollywood Hills a week ago, had been working on a film about a CIA mind-control program called MK ULTRA in which he said he had been involved, the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* reported Sunday. "He (Peters) was supposedly one of the people with whom the CIA was doing a lot of experimentation with drugs," church secretary Susan Shore told the newspaper. "We were going to make a film that was going to expose what the government was doing back in the early 1960s." Police have made no arrests in the murders.

FWST 11-19-82

• Mulcahy A medical examiner ruled Thursday that former CIA analyst Kevin Mulcahy, the man who blew the whistle on former agent Edwin Wilson's dealings with Libya, died of natural causes last month. Mulcahy, a heavy smoker and an alcoholic, died of bronchial pneumonia complicated by emphysema and liver problems. The 40-year-old Mulcahy was found dead Oct. 26 outside the door of a motel cabin he had rented in Shenandoah County, Va., about 90 miles west of Washington. His death was investigated by the FBI.

DMN 11-19-82

Foul play ruled out in death

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — A medical examiner Thursday ruled out foul play in the Oct. 26 death of a former CIA employee who was to have been a key prosecution witness in the just-completed arms trial of former spy Edwin Wilson. Dr. James Beyer, the chief medical examiner in Northern Virginia, said Kevin Mulcahy died of bronchopneumonia.

PHOTO COMPARISON ... Three "tramps" in the photo at left were arrested in Dealey Plaza the day of the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The tramp who is considered to look like Charles Harrelson is in center photo, and a mug shot of Harrelson that was taken in 1968 is on the right.

Harrelson's older brother Claude is an FBI agent. Charles spent the day before the Wood killing with the wife of a CIA agent-he testified he doesn't remember her name.

Kennedy 'confession' was bargain chip, Chagra says

By ANNE REIFENBERG
Star-Telegram Writer

SAN ANTONIO — Charles Harrelson's "confession" that he killed President Kennedy was to be used as bargaining power in a deal with the federal government over another assassination, Joe Chagra testified today.

Chagra told jurors that when he visited Harrelson, accused of murdering U.S. District Judge John H. Wood Jr. in May 1979, at Harris County Jail in September 1980, Harrelson told him about a "will" in which he admitted killing Judge Wood and President Kennedy.

Harrelson's reported confession was first made public after he was arrested on a freeway near Van Horn on Sept. 1, 1980, when the 44-year-old defendant held off police for several hours by pointing a pistol to his head. Before he was taken into custody on a host of state charges shortly after midnight, Harrelson reportedly admitted to both slayings.

Chagra said Harrelson told him, "He would clear up the Kennedy matter at the same time he cleared up the Wood matter. He said he wanted that as bargaining power... so he would do federal time instead of state time."

But Chagra — a star government witness since he pleaded guilty Sept. 17 to a charge he conspired to murder Wood — said, "Not really," when asked whether he believed Harrelson's claims, even when Harrelson drew a map of Dealey Plaza in Dallas to show Chagra where he was standing when Kennedy was shot.

Kennedy conspiracy buffs have given much attention recently to what has been dubbed the Harrelson/Tall Tramp Theory and is based on the arrest of three transients on Nov. 22, 1963, in the railroad yards near the Texas School Book Depository near where Kennedy was shot.

Two Fort Worth assassination researchers, Jim Marrs and Jack White, have professed in an article entitled *Is Kennedy's Assassin Sitting in Texas Jail?* to believe that one of the transients in a photo published with the article is Harrelson, who would have been 25 at the time.

FWST 11-2-82

FW photographer is convinced Harrelson was at JFK death site

By JIM MORRIS
Star-Telegram Writer

A Fort Worth photographer, who has compared police mug shots of Charles V. Harrelson with pictures of three so-called "tramps" arrested in Dallas' Dealy Plaza minutes after President John F. Kennedy was killed, says he is convinced that Harrelson was at the assassination site.

Harrelson, accused of slaying U.S. District Judge John H. Wood Jr. in 1979, was connected to the Kennedy killing during testimony in his trial in San Antonio. Joe Chagra, who has pleaded guilty to murder conspiracy, testified that Harrelson told him he shot Kennedy.

Kennedy was shot 19 years ago today in Dallas.

Photographer and graphics specialist Jack White said he has been studying mug shots and the tramp pictures since a fellow Kennedy assassination researcher remarked that he thought Harrelson looked familiar.

White, a consultant to the House Select Committee on Assassinations in 1978, said he did photo analyses and concluded that Harrelson was one of three men arrested by Dallas police in a railroad yard behind the Texas School Book Depository immediately after the shooting. A railroad employee had seen the men enter a railroad car.

The three were taken to Dallas County Jail but subsequently were released without being questioned.

In doing the photo comparisons, White looked for similarities in various facial features. He determined, he said, that in a 1963 photo of the "tall tramp" and a 1968 mug shot of Harrelson, the eyes, ears, nose and hair are virtually identical.

White also noted that a sizable scar over Harrelson's right eye, his double chin and the folds of skin around the corners of his mouth are evident in both pictures.

FWST 11-22-82

"There's no way that's not Harrelson, unless there are identical twins," he said.

White asserts that he is "not writing a book" and has "no axe to grind."

"I wasn't that crazy about Kennedy," he said. "But I hated to see him get killed and have it covered up."

White claims more than 500 spectators were in Dealey Plaza at the time of the assassination and "at least 20 of them were suspicious."

He said he does not believe enough credence has been put in Harrelson's alleged "confessions" to Chagra and to police during his arrest near Van Horn in 1980.

"I think somebody should be investigating everything Harrelson says," White said.

INFORMANT AYNESWORTH - Before reading this article from the November 21, 1982 Dallas Times Herald, some words of warning. Most JFK researchers are aware of how Hugh Aynesworth has reported the "facts" of the JFK case and why he may be an agent in the disinformation business. He admits to breaking the Oswald diary story but doesn't mention how it was stolen from the DPD. CD5, pages 6-9, includes still-censored reports from an FBI informant about Aynesworth, Bill Alexander, Newsweek and the Dallas Morning News, and a sum as high as $15,000 behind the diary story. A retired Secret Service agent says several pages were withheld from the WC by the FBI, yet Aynesworth's copy is supposedly complete. Aynesworth later became a Newsweek reporter who, on May 15, 1967, broke a major, negative report on the Garrison investigation. Researchers should be intrigued by the following letter, recently discovered in the LBJ library, addressed to LBJ press secretary George Christian. Although undated, it is probably May 13, 1967. For legibility and space only, it has been retyped. Aynesworth's career includes reporting for the DTH and ABC's 20/20, and his daughter reportedly works in the newsroom of Dallas' CBS-TV affiliate. In July 1979, Aynesworth and retired FBI agent Robert Gemberling appeared on Dallas PBS affiliate KERA; said Aynesworth: "I'm not saying there wasn't a conspiracy....I know most people in this country believe that there was a conspiracy. I just refuse to accept it and that's my life's work." You'll notice many omissions in Aynesworth's story, one of which is that the CIA assisted its employee, Clay Shaw, throughout the investigation. This is a major Garrison story in length only - perhaps some truth did get written.

THE GARRI GOOSECH

by Hugh Aynesworth

THE TRIP TO NEW ORLEANS WAS ANother wasted journey, as useless as the three letters, a dozen or more telephone calls, a telegram and three personal notes left with subordinates.

Jim Garrison just wasn't talking.

The hulking former Orleans Parish district attorney — one of the most colorful and outspoken politicians of recent history — now is a judge on Louisiana's Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, which handles more than 90 percent of the area's appellate cases.

A few months earlier Garrison had been ebullient over martinis, eager to share his story, eager to reveal what he indicated was a tremendously important secret, a secret of vital concern to the American people. "C'mon over sometime and I'll run it down for you. I know you don't believe what I've found but...."

Jim Garrison has maintained since 1967 that he had knowledge of secret information of vital interest, information about "who the real killers were" in the John F. Kennedy assassination. The heavy-jowled "Jolly Green Giant," as he is known by his friends and detractors alike, has accused the FBI, the CIA, Lyndon Johnson, and several Cuban exiles of being "involved" in the November 22, 1963, murder of the president. At one juncture Garrison even suspected JFK's brother, Bobby, of "having knowledge and covering it all up." Oh, yes, most segments of the news media had a hand in the conspiracy, too — along with the Dallas police, Dallas County Sheriff's Office and some publicly unnamed Dallas oilmen.

But today, it appears, the judge no longer believes the information he holds is all that important — at least not as vital as his $67,000-a-year job as an appellate judge.

Newsmen who have covered Garrison for 15 or 20 years — and he has gotten more ink and TV exposure than any politician in New Orleans history — claim he feels confident he can live out his life on the appeals bench, working no more than half a day, enjoying the position's power and prestige.

"He's not about to take a chance on anyone scrutinizing him again," says one reporter. "He's set for life and he can still remember when he had some really lean years. I doubt he'll ever mention the Kennedy assassination again publicly."

It wasn't so long ago that Jim Garrison did nothing BUT mention the Kennedy assassination publicly. He told everyone who would listen, and he told them often, that he and his investigators had discovered that Lee Harvey Oswald had not acted alone in killing the president, and that they knew who his co-conspirators were.

People listened, and many of them believed. Garrison was able to call on, at various times, the help of the august folks at *LIFE* magazine, Sen. Russell Long, comedian Mort Sahl, author Mark Lane. Also reporting in were investigators code-named Sam Spade, Batman and Bugs Bunny, and a self-styled Julius Caesar, complete with toga. Johnny Carson provided air time.

What kind of person could command all this attention, could produce such a circus?

EDITION ... PM DEAD LINE

WESTERN UNION PRESS MESSAGE

W. P. MARSHALL, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD — R. W. McFALL, PRESIDENT

CHECK TIME FILED

George Christian:

Here is the rough draft copy of the story we discussed this morning. It will be changed in a minor way, but for the most part, will be just this.

The story will break late Sunday via the wire services. Naturally, the strength and seriousness of it will evoke considerable reaction. I thought the President might be interested in this advance version.

I am not offering this for comment of any kind, nor a check of the validity of any part. Simply, its FYI...

Naturally I would expect this to go no further.

My interest in informing governmental officials of each step along the way is because of my intimate knowledge of what Jim Garrison is planning. The subpoena of two F.B.I. agents Saturday (today) is another step in his plan to make it seem that the F.B.I. and C.I.A. are involved in the JFK "plot." He is hell-bent on involving several high officials, is considering embarassing others. In his devious scheme he can--and probably will--do untold damage to this nation's image throughout the world.

I am well aware that Garrison wants the government to defy him in some manner or to step in to pressure a halt to his "probe," but, of course, this should not happen...for that is exactly what Garrison wants.

I intend to make a complete report of my knowledge available to the F.B.I., as I have done in the past.

Regards,

Hugh Aynesworth

COPY
Lyndon B. Johnson Libra

SON ASE

n Garrison has always stood out. of it is physical. He's six-foot-sev- big-boned and gangly. He has ex- ive, rather bulging eyes, surround- by the dark circles usually ciated with lack of sleep. He has a ant, deep voice and he often es Shakespeare. He can also dis- when he's interested, with his in- ty.

e was born Earling Carothers Gar- in 1921 in Denison, Iowa, but he his divorced mother soon moved to ago. During World War II, he d as a U. S. Army pilot of obser- n aircraft in Europe. After the he entered Tulane University Law ol in New Orleans, graduating in . Then there was graduate study three years of private law practice, nt as an assistant under District rney Leon Hubert (who would lat- ecome a counsel for the Warren mission). There were four years of n the DA's office, a couple of vain npts at elected office, a year as an tant city attorney. A name change m looked better on the ballot than unmanageable Earling Carothers nd in 1961 he filed to run for Or- Parish district attorney.

e incumbent, Richard Dowling, said to be in trouble. Two respect- ttorneys, F. Irvin Dymond and k Klein, jumped in the race. It Dowling, Dymond, Klein and 's-his-name.

month before that Democratic pri- — Republicans weren't a factor — Garrison got an unexpected t. A local TV station scheduled a way debate. Dowling, being the nbent, didn't think it wise to par- ate. Dymond and Klein made points, but it was the calm, reso- voice of the newcomer, Garrison, was the surprise of the show. gh some of his ideas were not all well thought out, his ability to d impressive and forceful made a solid contender.

ar the end of the debate, the were asked if they would be -time" DAs. Klein and Garrison ed viewers they would. Then Dy- l, probably the most respected nal lawyer in the state, forgot how esse.

make more than $17,000 a year I intend to go on making more $17,000 a year," he said bluntly. if the people of New Orleans a $17,000-a-year man as their dis- attorney, I'm not their boy."

Dowling led the primary, but didn't get the majority. Garrison ran a close second, Dymond third. Though Dowling ripped up the less-than-experienced Garrison in the runoff campaign, many Klein and Dymond supporters rallied behind Garrison and he won by 6000 votes out of 130,000 cast. Garrison became Orleans Parish district attorney in May 1962 and immediately named Klein his first assistant.

The new district attorney immediately let it be known that he was tough. In the months before Dowling left office, several felony cases were dismissed. When Garrison took control, he quickly had Dowling and one of his top assistants charged with malfeasance. The courts dismissed all charges and Garrison never did appeal, but he was getting the word out.

Garrison then set out to clean up the French Quarter, and thereby began a lengthy battle with New Orleans' criminal-judge establishment. Garrison couldn't move on his project without dipping into the "fines and fees" fund, and he had to apply to one of the criminal court judges, explaining the expenditures. The judges balked, and Garrison fostered his first "conspiracy."

The district attorney charged that the judges weren't doing their jobs. The judges retaliated by filing a criminal complaint of defamation. Garrison lost and was fined $1000, but he took his case all the way to the U. S. Supreme Court, where the conviction was reversed. Throughout, Garrison made much of the judges' "refusal" to act against crime and corruption. There was lots of ink, of course.

In actuality, Garrison's efforts — and noise — resulted in only a half-dozen fines, but they gave the appearance of a larger accomplishment. That kind of illusion was to become a hallmark of Garrison projects.

Thanks to his wittiness and a local press corps that seemed afraid to search beyond the superficial, Garrison suddenly was the city's "white knight." He was urged to run for mayor. He didn't, but in 1965 announced for a second term. His opponent, Criminal Judge Malcomb O'Hara, was no match, though he did get in some good shots. He referred to "the ugly force in him [Garrison] which compels him to destroy everyone who fails to bow to his will. It used to be called a Napoleonic complex." Garrison won handily.

After beginning his second four-year term in May 1966, Garrison soon ran afoul of the Metropolitan Crime Commission and its managing director, Aaron Kohn.

Kohn, a gritty, no-nonsense ex-FBI agent who headed political-corruption cleanups in Chicago and Philadelphia, had been rather light in criticizing Garrison during his first term, but a pardon application finally brought them head-to-head.

Gov. John McKeithen, a political and personal friend of Garrison's at the time, had given several reprieves keeping a Bourbon Street stripper named Linda Brigette from serving a 30-day term for lewd dancing. In 1966 she applied for a full pardon. Garrison backed it — even lobbied for it.

Kohn and the commission said the club was connected to organized crime and that pardoning Brigette was tantamount to criminal obstruction of justice.

Garrison bristled. He said Kohn "operates like the squid, which when attacked injects black fluid into the eyes of his opponent." Besides, Garrison added, "there is no organized crime in this city."

Shortly afterward, three New Orleans men were arrested along with some of the nation's best-known mafioso in a Queens, New York, restaurant. Garrison began taking heat for his obvious myopia about the mob influence in his city. Pressed, he convened a grand jury to "investigate" the situation.

Among those called before that jury was Carlos Marcello, reputed mob kingpin in the South. (He was assessed a 10-year sentence this past April 14 in St. Paul, Minnesota, for his part in an attempt to bribe a California federal judge. This followed a 7-year term meted in January of this year for bribery in a Louisiana insurance contract "fix.")

"Marcello appeared before the grand jury for exactly 12 minutes," recalls Aaron Kohn. "And his lawyer, G. Ray Gill, came out with him and told the press, 'He answered every one of their questions.' Can you imagine that? Twelve minutes!"

Despite Kohn's detailed presentation about gambling, prostitution, crooked bail bond practices, bribery in the pinball industry, mob control of liquor licensing, the grand jury said it could find no evidence that organized crime was present in the New Orleans community.

Garrison got tired of answering questions about the subject, however, and dropped out of the limelight for a while. "He spent more and more time at the Playboy Club and the New Orleans Athletic Club and hardly ever went to the office," Kohn says.

Garrison knew how to sidestep serious criticism: He would move on to something else. A trip to New York with oilman Joseph Rault and Sen. Russell Long provided just such a diversion.

On the flight back, Sen. Long — who has always claimed the death of his father, Huey Long, was part of a conspiracy — told Garrison if he were the New Orleans district attorney, he would investigate Lee Harvey Oswald's days in New Orleans. Oswald had lived there until a few weeks before President Kennedy was killed in Dallas.

The idea excited Garrison. He and his aides started studying the Warren Commission's report on the assassination and reading the treatises of conspiracy theorists. But it was a couple of related events that really got Garrison's "investigation" off the ground. While he and a few of his trusted aides were running back and forth between the DA's office and the public library, *LIFE* magazine editors in New York were planning an investigation of their own — one that would eventually bog down in Garrison's.

Look Magazine had just announced that they had paid a record amount for excerpts of William Manchester's *Death of a President*. A three-part series was scheduled to begin in February 1967. *LIFE* needed something to counter the Manchester excerpts.

LIFE, naturally enough, began its probe in Dallas; it was led by the magazine's respected Dallas bureau chief, Holland McCombs. McCombs suggested that three Dallas journalists — *Times Herald* police reporter George Carter, free-lancer Patsy Swank and myself — be hired to help.

"We've got to come up with something to combat *Look's* Manchester series," editor Ed Kern said when we met to draw specific assignments. They wanted conspiracy — nothing else.

After a month all potential "leads" had been run out and *LIFE* — as predicted by McCombs — had nothing. But then a routine telephone call to Garrison in New Orleans by reporter Richard Billings hit paydirt, it seemed. Garrison told Billings he, too, was investigating Oswald. "Come on down," he said.

In New Orleans, the *LIFE* team heard about Garrison's venture. It sounded promising. Soon the magazine was sending Billings and photographers around the country with Garrison and his aides, supplying photo aid and wining and dining the DA and his staff. Garrison promised they'd be "on the ground floor when things fall together."

But then Garrison ran into an old problem. To get investigative funds (for travel to Miami, Houston, Dallas, San Francisco, Las Vegas), he had to file papers explaining the expenditures. Three enterprising reporters for *The New Orleans States-Item* — Rosemary James, Jack Wardlaw and Jack Dempsey — noted those expenditures and broke the story that Garrison was investigating the Kennedy assassination.

Garrison's "story" suddenly caught the fancy of the nation and the world. Within hours of the *States-Item* break — February 17, 1967 — hundreds of reporters from more than 30 nations had converged on New Orleans to see what was going on. Garrison and his probe were suddenly Big News.

Meanwhile, civic pride emerged in the form of a private organization called "Truth and Consequences," headed by Russell Long's friend, oilman Joseph Rault, and Cecil Shilstone and Willard E. Robertson. Thousands of dollars were donated for Garrison's "investigation."

From reading the FBI's reports — interviews with several people in New Orleans who knew (or said they knew) Oswald — Garrison formed a local "hit list." He started calling in people, questioning them in his office and later before a grand jury.

Of prime importance was Dean Andrews, a roly-poly, jive-talking "nickel and dime" attorney who had told the FBI he had once represented Oswald on a minor offense and had been called by a friend of Oswald's to represent him eight hours before Oswald was killed by Jack Ruby. Andrews said the caller, a homosexual named "Clay Bertrand," had paid for the earlier representation of Oswald.

The FBI had concluded that Andrews was lying because he couldn't recall when he had seen Oswald and because he was ill in a local hospital (under sedation and without telephone) the weekend Oswald was killed. Nevertheless Garrison thought Andrews was the key. Bertrand, he concluded, was the man to find. He leaned on Andrews, told him he would be indicted if he didn't reveal who Bertrand was. Andrews insisted he didn't know.

About this time, Garrison called me with an invitation to come to New Orleans "to share information." Andrews had just been hauled before the grand jury. "What does Andrews know?" I asked.

"Oh nothing, probably," Garrison said, "but he's jackin' me around."

Meanwhile, a former Texan named Jack Martin, who had been charged with murder by abortion in Dallas County and who had become a self-styled private eye in New Orleans, had bent Garrison's ear about another "suspect." David Ferrie, a former Eastern Airlines pilot, had known Oswald and was "probably involved," Martin said.

Garrison's aides set up surveillance on Ferrie, and finally called him in for interrogation. Ferrie told Garrison the whole investigation was "ludicrous," that he was in no way involved.

"I don't believe that for a minute," Garrison told me.

A bincoular-watch was set across the street from Ferrie's house. Ferrie amused himself by waving at the officers. Then, five days after the first newspaper story about Garrison's "investigation," David Ferrie died of a cerebral aneurysm.

Anyone would have found Ferrie an interesting character, straight out of Damon Runyon. A skinny man, he was intelligent, homosexual, a self-styled "soldier of fortune." He had been fired by Eastern for taking young boys with him on flights in the "jumpseat." He had not a hair on his body (said to be the result of a syphilis infection years earlier), wore a grotesque red wig and matching paste-on eyebrows, and was said to be an avid anti-Castro fundraiser. Ferrie had named himself the New Orleans archbishop of a peculiar religious sect that had only one other member — Jack Martin. He also intermittently did private investigative work. In fact, when the Kennedy assassination occured, Ferrie was in a courtroom with Carlos Marcello, for whom Ferrie had done work, as Marcello fought federal deportation charges.

When Ferrie died, Garrison claimed it was suicide. "He knew we had the goods on him and he couldn't take the pressure," the DA said. But Coroner Nicholas Chetta, a close Garrison friend, said the death was from natural causes. "He was one of history's most important individuals," Garrison told hundreds of reporters. "A decision had been made earlier today to arrest Ferrie. Apparently, we waited too long."

Now Ferrie was dead, and Garrison's investigation had lost its hottest lead. The district attorney, besieged and badgered by packs of reporters, had to come up with something.

"There will be arrests," he said. "Charges will be filed, and on the basis of these charges, convictions will be obtained."

Garrison then went back to Dean Andrews. Garrison asked Andrews who "Bertrand" really was and the names of some Latin Americans Andrews had mentioned as having been with Oswald. Finally, after at least half a dozen such meetings, Andrews said he recalled that one was named Manual Garcia Gonzales. He had no proof that such a man even existed. Why had Andrews made up a ficticious name for

Garrison? "He wanted to shuck me like corn," Andrews said later, "pluck me like a chicken, stew me like an oyster. I wanted to see if the cat was kosher . . . ."

Garrison told his staffers that Gonzales was the "main man," the prime culprit in Kennedy's death. He believed this for months, until he couldn't find a Gonzales that was ever proven to be in Dallas or New Orleans.

Andrews kept playing with Garrison, apparently not realizing how serious the DA was. Finally, when he couldn't come up with who "Bertrand" really was, Garrison had Andrews charged with perjury. He was convicted, but never served a day because when his attorneys went to get the court record to formulate his appeal, they found the transcript had mysteriously disappeared.

That was to be the DA's only court "victory" in his Kennedy assassination "conspiracy."

On Feb. 24 Garrison was mobbed by reporters as he left a luncheon. He was asked if he had "solved" the assassination.

"Why, we did this weeks ago," he breezily replied. "We're working out details of evidence which will probably take months. We know that we are going to be able to arrest every person involved — at least every person who is still living. The key to the whole case is through the looking glass. Black is white and white is black. I don't want to be cryptic, but that's the way it is."

A few minutes later another score of reporters caught up with Garrison. He repeated his answers:

"My staff and I solved the case weeks ago. I wouldn't say this if I didn't have evidence beyond the shadow of a doubt. We know the key individuals, the cities involved and how it was done. There were several plots, but that's more than I wanted to say. Ferrie might not be the last suicide in the case. The only way they are going to get away from us is to kill themselves."

But arrests were not imminent, said Big Jim, "because we're building a case we will not lose."

One week later businessman Clay Shaw was arrested. And if Garrison didn't expect an arrest so quickly it might have been because at that time he didn't even have a witness against Shaw.

Every witness used against Shaw came out of the woodwork following Garrison's boast that he had already "solved" the case. It should not have been suprising then that Shaw was acquitted on a single ballot in less than an hour.

But a lot of people were soon to be caught up in the Garrison net — almost all of them vulnerable in some respect or another — convicts, homosexuals, Cuban exiles.

Six-foot-four-inch Clay Shaw was an unlikely candidate under any rule of measurement. Respected, well-liked, intellectual, Shaw had built the New Orleans Trade Mart into a prospering center and had renovated several Vieux Carre homes. He was also a playwright, a poet — and a homosexual.

Looking for the ficticious "Clay Bertrand," Garrison had suddenly decided it was Shaw. "They always change their last names, but never their first names," he told me. Shaw was called in and questioned. Shaw denied ever using another name. He told friends Garrison's interrogation was laughable. He didn't expect to hear any more about it.

Then Garrison "found" another witness. While the press kept bombarding him with questions about when he was going to make arrests, an LSU student and part-time insurance salesman wrote Garrison from Baton Rouge that he had known Ferrie and some of his friends and might be of help. Andrew "Moo Moo" Sciambra, an assistant DA, was quickly dispatched to Baton Rouge to interview Perry Lee Russo, the letter writer.

They talked for several hours, and Russo recounted a "plot session" with Ferrie, Lee Harvey Oswald and others present — a meeting in which plans to assassinate President Kennedy were discussed, said Russo. Sciambra rushed back to Garrison and typed out a lengthy report.

Now Garrison had a conspiracy meeting, which he had to have to make a conspiracy case in Louisiana. But Russo had not identified Clay Shaw as being present. Russo was invited to New Orleans by the district attorney's office. He was hypnotized. Suggestions were thrown at him: "Who is that tall man at the meeting, that tall, white-headed man? Is his name Shaw?"

Soon Russo was saying Shaw was present. Then he was put him under the influence of sodium pentothal (truth serum) and additional "suggestions" refined Shaw's presence.

Later that week, a drug dealer/thief named Vernon Bundy sent word from the parish prison (after being beaten badly by other inmates) that he could add to Garrison's case if only they'd get him out of that cellblock. Bundy said he had seen Oswald and Shaw exchanging money at Lakefront Airport several years before.

Both Bundy and Russo failed friendly polygraph tests; some of Garrison's more honest aides suggested they weren't fit witnesses. Garrison would have none of it. They were good enough for him.

On March 1, 1967, Shaw was arrested and charged with conspiracy to kill President John F. Kennedy. He was the first and only person ever tried with complicity in the assassination. The arrest stunned the whole community — which quickly polarized: Some believed Garrison must have evidence, others knew that Shaw couldn't be involved in anything of the sort.

Garrison was still looking for Gonzales. "He fits in here somehow," he told me. Writing in *Tempo Magazine*, an Italian publication, in April 1967, Garrison stated he would gladly give up Clay Shaw if he could but get hold of the "true assassin," Manuel Garcia Gonzales.

Garrison's name was a household word. Someone had finally been arrested and charged in the Kennedy assassination — and he was alive, so maybe the "real story" could be ferreted out. Center ring became whatever swanky Crescent City restaurant Big Jim frequented. He held court almost every night. *LIFE* magazine provided credibility: running down "leads," badgering potential witnesses, doing photo work for the probe.

Garrison soon had a preliminary hearing — before an unusual three-judge panel — to solidify his arrest of Shaw. Russo and the beaten Bundy told their stories, the judges shook their heads with wonderment and decided there was cause to proceed to trial. Shaw's lawyers, still in a state of shock and confusion, had no defense, other than to chip away at the prosecution witnesses. Shaw was bound over for trial.

Now Garrison had a problem. None of his assistants were competent investigators. Were it not for the seriousness of the situation, their investigative actions would have been hilarious. A handful of New Orleans cops was assigned to Garrison, but he was less than satisfied with their performance. Garrison decided to recruit a professional.

He met with William Gurvich, one of three brothers who ran a well-respected detective agency. Would Gurvich be his chief investigator? Garrison explained that he had witnesses claiming that Oswald, Ferrie, Shaw and others were co-conspirators, but he needed to prove that Shaw was Bertrand. Also, before a conspiracy could be proven, there had to be an overt act. "I'm short of people who can really do the job," Garrison told Gurvich.

"I thought he must have something," Gurvich later said. "I couldn't imagine he would be arresting people on nothing." The intriguing thought that he might be a part of something really important drew Gurvich into the fold. As a dollar-a-year man, he started putting the probe together, often spending his own money for expenses. Almost immediately he saw that Shaw had been arrested on flimsy evidence, "but I kept feeling that Jim wasn't telling me everything he knew."

Garrison insisted all the operatives he sent around the country report in via code names. "The f------ Feebies [FBI] will never figure that out" Garrison said. So the calls came in from Sam Spade, Blackstone, Barney, Brown, Bugs Bunny, Patsy and Batman.

Gurvich had handled many unusual investigations during his 20 years in the business, but he wasn't prepared for some of Garrison's ideas. Once the DA told him to buy some "red pepper guns."

"For what?" Gurvich asked.

"We'll raid the damn FBI office with 'em," Garrison replied.

Another time Gurvich was told to take another investigator and "go to the Leather Capital of the world" to see if they could find charge accounts in Shaw's name. Gurvich admitted he didn't know where the Leather Capital was. "San Francisco, goddammit," Garrison answered. A search of Shaw's home had turned up costumes and whips (Shaw's Mardi Gras costume that year), and Garrison told everyone Shaw was a pervert and that he "probably bought those whips in San Francisco." Gurvich couldn't find any such charge accounts.

The other "investigators" were busy, too. One chased Manuel Garcia Gonzales. Another checked the garbage cans of a former Cuban diplomat (before Castro) who lived in Dallas — Sergio Arcacha-Smith. Two of them, along with a *LIFE* photographer (and on a second trip, Garrison himself), watched a Las Vegas nightclub act, secretly taping and photographing with a tiny Minox camera. Former Dallasite Breck Wall had a skit in his "Bottoms Up" revue called the "Masochistic Mambo," in which, Garrison claimed, Wall told about the assassination. One of the more imaginative of the conspiracy theorists had told Big Jim that Wall had been a friend of Jack Ruby's and had telephoned Ruby the day after Kennedy was killed.

Still others went to Denver and Albuquerque to find and detain a Cuban exile who was once a friend of Ferrie's. Without extradition they hauled Julian Buznedo back to New Orleans, where he passed a polygraph test and was dumped out on the street, minus his job and money.

And the kooks kept coming to New Orleans, fueling the "investigation." A man called Cedric von Rolleston said he had known Oswald as a small boy in New York. A mural painter, von Rolleston said he met Jack Ruby in the Dallas police station and Ruby "offered to cut me in on the assassination." He said he carried money to Alexandria, Louisiana, where he delivered it to Shaw and Oswald. "I knew it was Oswald because I had worshipped him as a 13-year-old boy," von Rolleston said as he told of a strange ritual in which he took 12- and 13-year-old boys into the woods for "worship" ceremonies.

After Garrison decided he couldn't work the Alexandria link into his convoluted theory, he refused to talk to von Rolleston and stuck him with a large hotel bill. Von Rolleston said it wasn't Shaw after all.

A man convicted of burning down a church in Oregon showed up with a story that he had been a conduit in a drug-running business with Ruby, Shaw and Oswald. A man calling himself "Julius Caesar" appeared wearing a toga and sandals and put Oswald, Ferrie and Shaw together before reporters found out he was an ex-mental patient who wasn't within hundreds of miles of the action when he claimed to be — forcing Garrison to abandon him, too.

Meanwhile, probably aware that Gurvich would quit if he knew the score, Garrison kept Russo away from him. "I wasn't close to him, but what I saw I didn't like," Gurvich recalled recently. "It wasn't real."

Finally Gurvich had seen enough. There was talk that Bobby Kennedy might be hauled before the Orleans grand jury when he came to New Orleans for a speech that year — a ploy Gurvich figured was nothing more than more Garrison hoopla. Gurvich hopped a plane for New York, where he visited with the slain president's brother, telling him that Garrison had "no case, nothing."

Before Gurvich could return to New Orleans, clean out his desk and quit the "investigation," a Kennedy aide leaked the Gurvich-visit story to a New York newspaper and word got back to Garrison before Gurvich could. Gurvich was locked out of his office, vilified in press conferences as a traitor and later charged with "removal of a movable" (the taking of Garrison's master file). He was never tried. Later, he helped Shaw's defense lawyers.

Meanwhile Garrison pushed forward. Mort Sahl moved to New Orleans to serve as an investigator. Mark Lane and several other self-styled investigators closed the ranks. Garrison made personal appearances before anti-Warren Commission groups, raising money and ego. Still more mental derelicts, liars and con men were drawn to the case. Usually Garrison accepted them with open arms.

Throughout, the New Orleans press took a rather benign stance toward Garrison. During the two years from Shaw's arrest until his acquittal, there was not one editorial against Garrison and his grandstanding.

But some members of the national press dug in and reported the circus factually. James Phelan wrote in *The Saturday Evening Post* that Russo had never mentioned Shaw's name in that all-important interview with the assistant DA, Sciambra. *Newsweek* reported that several potential witnesses were offered bribes to make up testimony. *The New York Times* and NBC News came through with telling investigative pieces, including a special "White Paper" on NBC with Andrews explaining how he made the whole thing up.

Comedian Sahl (some thought his role was, indeed, proper), in his 1976 book *Heartland* told how he met Garrison and became infected with investigative zeal:

"I walked to the door and a man emerged, all six-foot-seven-inches of him, wearing a bathrobe. I said 'I'm Mort Sahl, and I came down here to shake your hand.' Garrison said, 'I hope you're available to do a lot more than that.' Later he took me to a wine cellar at the Royal Orleans Hotel and opened up the manila envelope that was the beginning of a compilation of a four-year investigation. It contained documents on Pentagon and Central Intelligence Agency involvement in the events surrounding the Kennedy assassination. That was the first time that I knew more than I would like to know."

A few weeks later Sahl was on *The Tonight Show* extolling Garrison as "the most important man in America." He talked producers into inviting Garrison, which they did a few days later. Johnny Carson refused an offer from NBC News executives to have some knowledgeable reporters on with Garrison; he wanted to do the interview himself. It was another "justification" of the still non-existent case against Shaw.

Though Shaw was the only victim of Garrison's bizarre probe who was tried, at least a dozen others were adversely affected in one way or another. Some were indicted, but fought extradition from other states — allowing Garrison to continually mention them as "co-conspirators" and "killers." Some lost jobs, some found their children victimized by Garrison's public utterances. Still others spent hard-earned savings for legal fees.

As the media closed in on the real "facts" of his investigation, Garrison always seemed to come up with something new. Usually these quickly conceived counterattacks were forgotten by the next press conference.

One of Garrison's "startling new disclosures" was that he had "uncoded" numbers found in Oswald's notebook that proved Oswald knew Jack Ruby's telephone number. All you had to do, said a straight-faced Garrison, was take No. 19106, translate the post office exchange to letters and numbers, unscramble the numbers and subtract 1300 from that to get Whitehall 1-5601, Ruby's number.

Where did he get the 1300? Simple, Garrison answered — that was the block on Dauphine Street where Clay Shaw lived. Sen. Russell Long tried to explain the "code" on *Face the Nation* that weekend, but got all flustered when reporters kept asking how the unscrambling worked. Long didn't completely understand it, he admitted, but he believed it.

Garrison kept in touch with a mysterious woman in a Mexico city jail who kept telling him she had seen Oswald with Lyndon Johnson and was being held by the Mexican authorities "because I know too much." Eventually he found out that the woman — who later wrote her own conspiracy book — was jailed for not paying her hotel bill.

As the time for Shaw's trial loomed nearer, Garrison had assembled a cast of characters that would have made *Saturday Night Live* look dead. He knew Russo and Bundy weren't strong enough, since the defense had collected enough on their backgrounds to completely negate them. But he had another secret star waiting in the wings — Charles Spiesel.

Spiesel, an accountant from New York City, testified that he met Ferrie at a French Quarter bar in mid-1963 and accompanied him to a meeting later where Clay Shaw and Ferrie discussed killing the president. A neat, dapper man who spoke with precision and perfect inflection, Spiesel was an impressive witness on direct testimony. The defense team could see that Spiesel had captivated the jury. As the defense was handed the witness for cross-examination, the leader of the defense team, the same F. Irvin Dymond Garrison beat in his first DA race, asked for and got a recess. He and his assistants trooped into the hallway of the Criminal Courts Building and argued whether to even try to cross-examine the strong witness.

But then came a break. A clerk scurried by a grinning Garrison and corraled Dymond, informing him that there was a long-distance call. It was an investigator hired by the Shaw team reporting in from New York. Dymond came back with an ear-to-ear grin. They rushed the detective's report to New Orleans on a late plane that night while Dymond begged for and was given a delay until morning.

Spiesel wasn't all that he seemed to be, it turned out. He had filed a $16,000,000 lawsuit against the New York City police, a detective agency and a psychiatrist claiming they "hypnotized" him and harassed him until his business failed and his sex life was ruined.

Why $16,000,000, Dymond asked the next morning when Spiesel re-took the witness stand. "One million dollars for every year of the conspiracy," Spiesel replied. He said "they" had hypnotized him 50 or 60 times and he thought it was probably some kind of a Communist conspiracy.

"And are you the same Charles Spiesel that fingerprints his daughter every time she comes to visit?" Dymond ventured.

"I certainly am," came the answer.

"Why?" Dymond asked.

"Because they always disguise themselves," Spiesel said.

The jury was stunned. Garrison and his assistants were stunned. Shaw and his lawyers had real hope for the first time. The next day Judge Edward E. Haggerty took the jury, lawyers and Spiesel to show them the building where the alleged plot session took place. It was not surprising when no such site could be found.

So Shaw was vindicated. One juror said they would have come in with the not-guilty verdict in 20 minutes had not several of the jurors expressed a need to go to the bathroom.

But Garrison wasn't finished. Hours after both New Orleans newspapers editorialized for him to resign immediately, Big Jim filed charges against Shaw again — this time for perjury. Federal courts later blocked this prosecution, terming it double jeopardy.

Garrison called the press "a bunch of pissants" and vowed he'd not resign. He didn't; in fact he ran for and won a third term as district attorney, but more troubles were brewing.

A federal strike force got wind of allegations Garrison was taking money from pinball operators and that his longtime crony, Pershing Gervais, was the conduit. Gervais was in the midst of serious troubles with the Internal Revenue Service at the time and the feds simply told him he'd better help with the public bribery investigation or he would be prosecuted by the IRS. Gervais, no stranger to deals, made one.

In the months to come, the feds taped many conversations with Gervais talking to Garrison about "helping" the pinball boys — and passing money to the DA. Finally they arrested Garrison at his home and retrieved $1200 in $50-dollar bills from a drawer where Gervais saw him place it. Garrison even had some of the purple from the marked money on his fingers.

Garrison blamed the whole thing on the federal government's "fear" that he had solved the Kennedy assassination. "They'll do anything to shut me up," he said.

Though government tapes seemed to indicate that Garrison was no more than a whining, complaining politician on the take, Big Jim turned the feds into the villains and the jury acquitted him.

On acquittal day, Garrison called me to a bar and launched into a tirade against the FBI. In the presence of two other reporters, Garrison told a 27-minute story about how the FBI had tried to entrap him in the toilet at the Los Angeles airport a few weeks before.

He said he had "new" evidence against Shaw, and now knew "for sure" who all was involved in the Kennedy assassination.

Seeking his third term, Garrison was opposed by an articulate young attorney named Harry Connick. Big Jim "campaigned" nearly every day at the New Orleans Athletic Club — spending more time there than at his office. Fellow club members said he was still obsessed with the Kennedy-Shaw case, and talked of little else.

It was at the athletic club that something happened that could have ended Garrison's public career, if it hadn't been hushed up. It didn't come to light until several months after the fact, in February 1970, when syndicated columnist Jack Anderson wrote: "The Orleans parish grand jury is investigating a charge that New Orleans Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison sexually molested a 13-year-old boy at the city's posh Athletic Club."

Anderson went on for 15 paragraphs detailing the allegation, which had been investigated by Aaron Kohn and several reporters.

"There is an irony in the charges" Anderson wrote. "Garrison has frequently brought the element of perversion and sex into his own cases. In his most famous case, the prosecution of Clay Shaw for conspiring to kill President Kennedy, Garrison's office made much of Shaw's alleged homosexuality. The jury threw out Garrison's conspiracy charge, but Shaw remained marked with the sexual stigma."

Connick knew of the incident, but, to his credit, refused to make it an issue in the campaign.

Garrison was never asked by the grand jury to appear, nor were the boy's brother and father and club employees who had witnessed the incident.

"I guess he'd just say it was the federal government that made him do it," said attorney Dymond. "There's no doubt in my mind he did it" said Crime Commission director Kohn.

Connick beat Garrison the next time around and is still the Orleans Parish district attorney. Garrison twice ran unsuccessfully for a seat on the Louisiana Supreme Court (a state-wide race where his power base didn't count as much) and then in 1978, won the appellate court seat. As would be expected, there was hardly a murmur about him taking money from the pinball operators or the athletic club incident.

Meanwhile Perry Russo admitted while taking a polygraph test in an attempt to become a New Orleans cop that he was a homosexual and a drug-user, and he told Shaw's attorneys later that Garrison had forced him into fingering Shaw in the case. "I never dreamed he had nobody but me," Russo said in a taped interview.

Shaw's attorney filed a multi-million-dollar civil suit against Garrison and the founders of the Truth and Consequences group, but then Shaw — almost penniless from the several years of defending himself against the spurious charges — died of cancer before the case could come to trial.

"Nowadays people say he [Garrison] did what he did for political aggrandizement," wrote Mort Sahl in 1976, "or that he pursued the Shaw case for political ambition. But Jim is an honest man and he knew no other way to express himself."

Shaw died Aug. 15, 1974, of cancer, and though in his declining years he was broke, he retained the spirit that had carried him through the ordeal. He didn't hate Garrison.

"I'm not in any sense vindictive toward anyone involved in this," he told me, "but they're not my favorite people, obviously. But really, if you allow yourself to hate people, you get into a kind of bad thing for yourself. If a man can reduce you to making you hate him, in a way he's already won a kind of victory over you."

The judge in the Shaw trial, Edward Haggerty, who now practices law in New Orleans, still has doubts about Shaw. "I know Garrison's an a------ and a fool," Haggerty said in a recent interview, "but, you know, I still think Shaw was involved, somehow."

Since the Shaw case Garrison has written two conspiracy books and lectured widely, but in recent years he generally has kept the lowest of low profiles.

"I haven't seen him in years," said Gurvich recently. "Don't care to."

"It's been several years," said Rosemary James, one of the three reporters who originally broke the story of Garrison's entry into the Kennedy assassination sweepstakes. "I don't know what he's doing."

Where once "The Jolly Green Giant" captivated those who encountered him on his French Quarter runs, he now is seldom seen in public. He has suffered recurring back trouble for several years and often "just goes home and reads and writes," according to a longtime lawyer friend.

Though the ringmaster no longer presides over one of history's most bizarre circuses he apparently still "plays" to a small, select group of friends who find him fascinating regardless of whether or not he ever had the answers. Secure in his appellate-court position, it doesn't seem likely that the old Jim Garrison will ever have to provide proof. □

Hugh G. Aynesworth is the editor of Parkway *magazine and is the co-author of* The Only Living Witness, *to be published by Simon & Schuster early next year. He first encountered and covered Jim Garrison in the late Sixties as a bureau chief for* Newsweek.

The Dallas Morning News Saturday, November 6, 1982

Dallas woman claims she was LBJ's lover

Madeline Duncan Brown ... says she decided to reveal the affair to "clear the record."

By Christi Harlan
Staff Writer of The News

A 56-year-old Dallas woman said Friday she was the mistress of Lyndon Baines Johnson for almost 20 years, but friends and members of the Johnson family said the woman's claims are groundless.

Madeline Duncan Brown, a retired advertising executive, said the affair began in 1949, the year Johnson was elected to the U.S. Senate, and ended in 1967, a year before Johnson completed his second term as president.

"I feel like I have been part of his life and part of history," Mrs. Brown said at a news conference Friday at the Dallas Press Club. She said she decided to reveal the affair to "clear the record."

Spokesmen for the Johnson family said Mrs. Brown had purchased radio advertising time from the Johnsons' stations in Austin, but they said the woman was otherwise unknown to friends and family members.

Betty Tilson, spokeswoman for Lady Bird Johnson, said the former first lady was on her way to the East Coast Friday and could not be reached for comment.

"I doubt 100 percent that she (Mrs. Johnson) has ever heard of Mrs. Brown," Mrs. Tilson said. "I have talked to other people who worked at the station and friends of the family, and they don't know her."

Mrs. Brown said the affair could be confirmed by Johnson's brother-in-law, O.P. (Bob) Bobbitt of Austin, but Mrs. Tilson said Bobbitt issued a statement saying "the whole thing is absolutely ridiculous."

"I have not read the report of Mrs. Brown's charges apparently made today in Dallas," Bobbitt's statement said. "To my knowledge, these charges are without foundation, and it is absurd to suggest that I might or could confirm them.

"I condemn what seems to be an increasing number of falsehoods regarding President Johnson's career, and I pity those who try to profit by them," Bobbitt said.

Mrs. Brown's statements followed by less than three weeks a published report that Johnson had a love affair with Alice Glass of Austin beginning in 1939 and continuing through the early years of his presidency.

Mrs. Brown said her affair with Johnson began in the fall of 1949 after a party at the Driskill Hotel in Austin. She said she continued to meet Johnson for romantic interludes at the Driskill — sometimes as often as two or three times a week, she said — into the 1960s.

The other two major papers didn't even cover the news conference. At least two TV stations did, and one reported her claim that LBJ and Sam Rayburn knew of a conspiracy to kill Kennedy before it happened (Rayburn died 11-16-61). Here's how the relevant part went - A: He (LBJ) knew there was a conspiracy, yes, he told me so. Q: He knew that Kennedy was going to be hit in Dallas? A: That's right. Q: So by that information, he was involved in the assassination of President Kennedy, is that what you're saying? A: Yes. She was accompanied by her son whose father, she said, was LBJ. The young man has big ears.

BRIEFS....The Moorman blowup has drawn strong interest from two news organizations, both of which are seriously considering funding for a complete computer enhancement; they have requested confidentiality and, because strong, new supportive evidence has surfaced, it will be temporarily granted....Jack White and I were not overly concerned about the size of the gunman because the image is so clear, but those who thought he was too small to be directly behind the wall are correct: he is on the other side of the picket fence and standing on something, perhaps a car bumper....There's still no acoustics rebuttal from Dr. Barger....There's an unconfirmed report that researcher Rush Harp died recently....Earl Golz took a temporary job as press aid to Congressman Bill Patman during his campaign; Patman won, but Earl's job ended and he's looking around....Meanwhile, the Abilene bank story that got him fired from the DMN has been proven to be virtually 100% accurate; so much for honesty....Henry Wade was again elected District Attorney; he won 60% of the vote over former FBI agent Richard Harrison....Dick Sprague responded to my analysis of the Couch & Weigman films and his comments will be included with new photo evidence next month.... Auto tycoon and accused drug smuggler John DeLorean has an interesting attorney - WC counsel Joseph Ball.

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